




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MOTION: ABBOTT GOVERNMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.39 pm): What a shameless, hopeless excuse for a government we have across the aisle from us here. They get elected with no plan and no plans for paying for their no plans, and now they want someone else to solve their problem for them.

What we have here is a costing document from the Treasurer. Where in his costing document does he say, 'Oh, but we want \$5 billion from the Commonwealth'? When did he say that during the election campaign? He said, 'We reject the Commonwealth's asset recycling scheme.' He does not want a part of it. He did not want a part of it back in November, December and January, and now, as the budget comes closer, as the tidal wave of his own financial ineptitude looks like sweeping him away, he wants to tie himself to the rock of proper financial and prudent government by the Liberal Party and the coalition in Canberra by tapping into their \$5 billion. He says, 'This is our money. We are entitled to a part of it.' But he knew that the \$5 billion was an asset recycling initiative.

The decision of the people of Queensland has been made. We accept that decision. But the Treasurer does not want to accept the fact that the proposition he put to the people of Queensland means the government does not get the money. You cannot say, 'Oh, we won't do this but we want the asset recycling money,' and then put your hand up for it. Do those opposite know where the asset recycling money comes from? It comes from the dividends of the businesses that were sold that would lead to the Commonwealth getting the tax revenue. It comes from the revenues that the Commonwealth would receive. The Treasurer does not even understand the program behind it.

What has the Commonwealth funded? Let us go through it: the Bruce Highway upgrade, \$6.7 billion; the Gateway upgrade north, \$1 billion; the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, \$1.3 billion; the Warrego Highway, \$508 million; and the Cape York regional package, \$208 million. And it continues to fund the Moreton Bay rail project.

Let us look at what this government is talking about doing in terms of funding. Let us look at what it has actually put on paper in its savings measures. In terms of reprioritisation of capital grants over the four years, they want to save themselves \$178.2 million. For those who do not know, capital grants are the moneys that go into public housing, roads and state development. That is where the capital spending cut is coming from. It is not coming from anything the Commonwealth is not delivering, because the Commonwealth is delivering.

This government's and this Treasurer's financial ineptitude has been on display for the whole world to see over the past six weeks. First we were in recession; then we were not. First we were pulling money out from behind people's ears; now we want to go and pull it out from Canberra. That is what the financial management of this government is all about.

If you were the Commonwealth, would you give this mob any money? Let us have a look at their record: a \$1.2 billion failed Health payroll scheme; \$600 million wasted on the Traveston Dam; \$1.2 billion wasted on the Tugun desalination plant; \$2.6 billion wasted on the western corridor

recycled water scheme; and \$350 million wasted on the Wyaralong Dam, which failed to connect to the south-east water grid. Dams without pipes, pipes without dams, trains without seats, trains that do not fit through tunnels. Why would you give this lot a brass razoo? They cannot even spend it properly. Of course, let us not forget that old favourite: 'Let's hand over \$16 million to a fake Tahitian prince.' But at least he did not go and buy fake Louis Vuitton!

There is no good purpose to this motion. This government was elected, so they say, with a plan to pay down debt, to not raise taxes and to fund infrastructure. A budget is due in six weeks. The Treasurer does not know how to do it. He is hoist on his own petard and now he is looking to the Commonwealth to bail him out. It is a false proposition that should not be supported.